

## Section 9: Justice Information Network Information (JIN)



## Justice Information Network

### Washington's Statewide Justice Information Network (JIN)

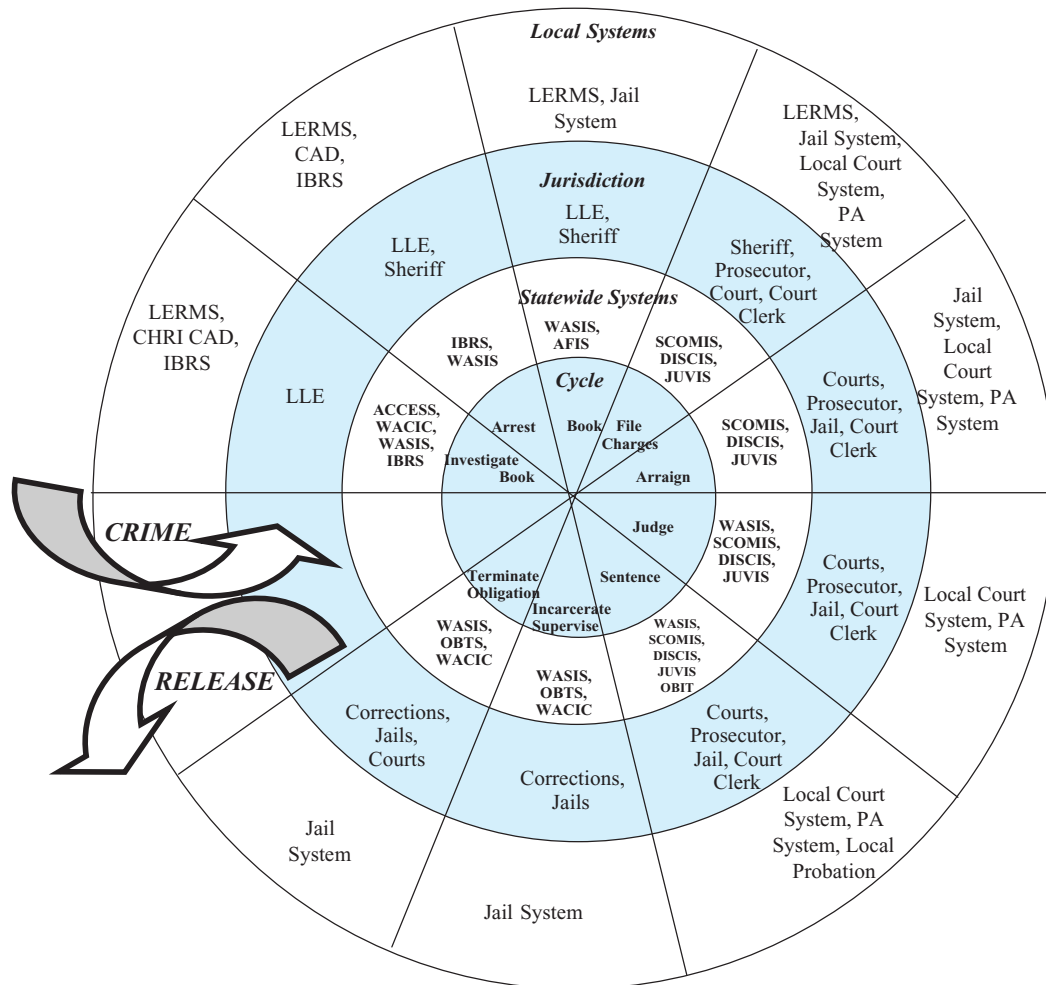
When observers envision the criminal justice system as a turning wheel, then criminal history information appears as one fuel that powers its movement. Each stage in the criminal justice process generates information on which the next stage is dependent; as noted at Washington's Justice Information Network website, for example, "Offenders cannot be punished until police file reports, prosecutors file charges, and judges sign sentencing documents" (Washington State Department of Information Services 2002). Growing numbers of criminal cases, convictions, and offenders mean the justice system must process information more efficiently across jurisdictional and functional lines. Gaps and delays in information processing can compromise public safety.

Washington's legislature passed the 1984 Criminal Justice Information Act (CJIA) (RCW 10.98.010) to "provide a system of reporting and disseminating felony criminal justice information that provides: (1) Timely and accurate criminal histories for filing and sentencing under the sentencing reform act of 1981, (2) identification and tracking of felons, and (3) data for statewide planning and forecasting of the felon population." The Act also established a steering committee, which until recently informally coordinated criminal history reporting systems. In 2003, the Legislature renamed the committee the Washington Integrated Justice Information (WIJI) Board, enlarged its membership to include local government agencies, and formalized its scope and responsibility with specific powers and duties (SHB 1605, Chapter 104, Laws of 2003). The new law also recognizes advances in technology for information storage, retrieval, communication and sharing. "Integration" of information no longer requires building and combining huge databases into a single system. Instead, "integration" can mean the remote retrieval of information from separate, individualized databases and its display in a single format (Washington State Justice Information Network 2003).

Currently, four agencies – the State Patrol, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Corrections, and Department of Licensing -- maintain the major state-level databases containing criminal justice information, which, for the most part, they receive from local law enforcement and courts. At the same time, local justice professionals must access this state-level information as they do their jobs. Relevant information, however, is recorded in various formats, requiring a practitioner to gain access to each database separately. In addition, local jurisdictions maintain their own records in a similarly wide range of databases.

Figure 9-1 on the next page depicts the role information systems currently play in Washington State's criminal justice process. At each stage in an alleged offender's progression through the system (the inner ring, labeled "Cycle"), information is both accessed and recorded. Databases storing this information are shown in the second ring out from center, "Statewide Systems" and in the outer ring, "Local Systems." At the investigation stage, for example, seven local and statewide systems may contain relevant information (in addition to national databases not shown on the chart).

**FIGURE 9-1**  
**Washington State Justice Information Network**  
**Overview of Criminal Justice System**



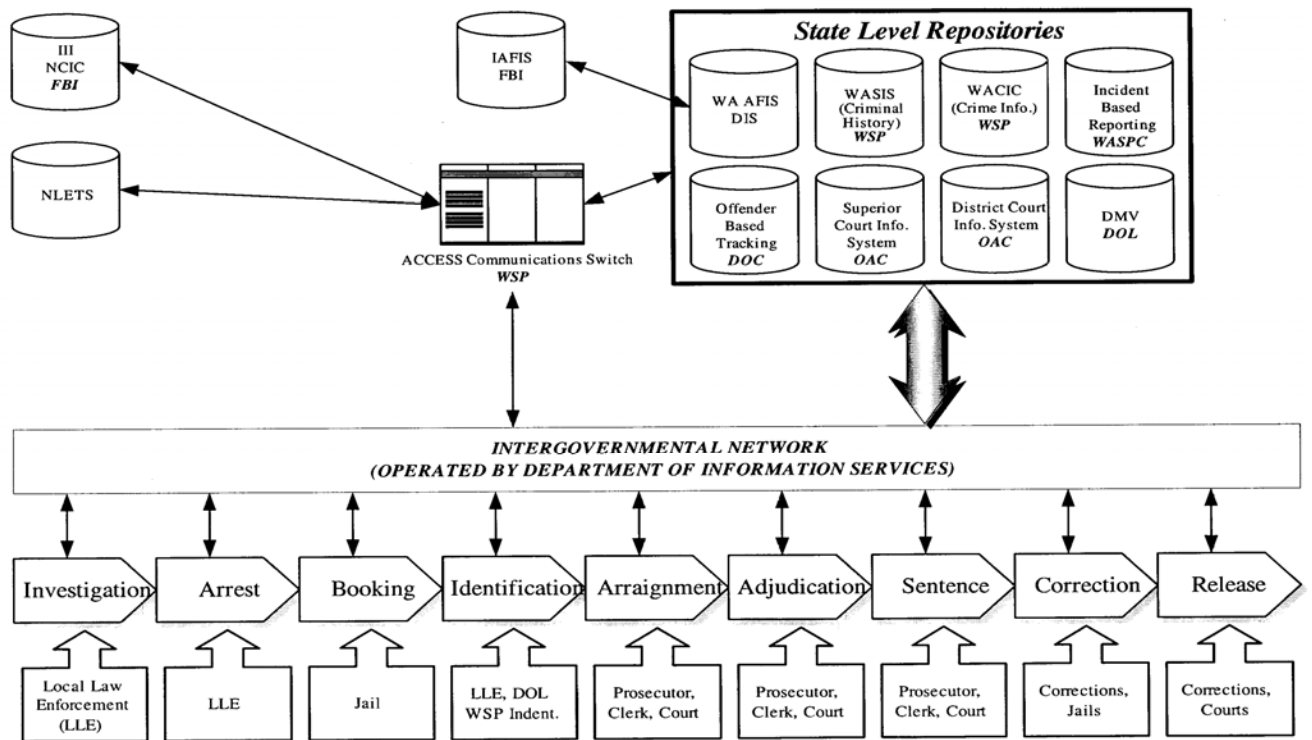
**Key**

WASIS – WSP Criminal History System  
WACIC – WSP Crime Information System  
SCOMIS – AOC Superior Court Management Information System  
DISCIS – AOC District Court Information System  
JUVIS – AOC Juvenile Information System  
LERMS – Law Enforcement Records Management System  
CAD – Computer-Aided Dispatch Systems  
LLE – Local Law Enforcement  
IBRS – Incident-Based Reporting System  
OBTS – DOC Offender-Based Tracking System  
PA – Prosecuting Attorney

“Justice Information Network,” or “JIN,” is an umbrella phrase referring to Washington’s “strategic process and governance structure for sharing criminal justice information” (Washington Justice Information Network 2002 1) – cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional efforts now overseen by the Integrated Justice Information Board. These efforts are complicated and slowed by the sheer number of data systems and the historical autonomy of various

components of the criminal justice system. Policy makers' vision, as it appears in HB 1605, is to provide "complete, accurate, and timely information to criminal justice agencies and courts in a single computer session" while eliminating redundancies of effort, improving decision-making and public and criminal justice system safety, and maintaining security and respect for privacy rights (SHB 1605). The diagram below depicts how information might be transmitted to and from state-level databases to allow online, real time access to fingerprints, court documents, photos, criminal histories, and more, enabling justice professionals to quickly identify dangerous offenders, assemble complete criminal histories for sentencing, track offenders under supervision, and perform fast and accurate background checks, and meet other needs.

Figure 9-2  
Washington Criminal Information Interchange Process



In order to realize these goals, the Integrated Justice Information Board must foster collaboration among jurisdictions, including uniform data standards and protocols for data transfer and sharing, interface applications, and connectivity standards; and develop connections and applications enabling single session access from multiple platforms. An important new step is the development of a Summary Offender Profile (SOP), linking various databases through any offender's name and other identifying information in an easy-to-use Web-based format. SOP draws on existing data to respond to queries from authorized professionals, requiring no new databases and minimal support.

The Board must also seek and allocate available funding for justice information-sharing, increase awareness and participation by local agencies, and identify additional opportunities to advance and coordinate integration efforts. The recent hiring of a program director will assist the Board in meeting these responsibilities and provide a needed staff focus.

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